



Mayor's Report *March, 2017*



The Zoning Bylaw amendment to permit a columbarium as a principal permitted use in the P-1 Public Use Zone, and the simultaneous proposed re-zoning of the parcel of land east of the Greendale Trestle from R-1 to P-1 (Public Use), brings the Town closer to providing a columbarium site in Lake Cowichan. Steps to bring this project to completion include the drafting of a bylaw outlining the operation of the columbarium, establishing a Care Fund and a Board of Trustees must be done first. Once the legal framework has been established, the site preparation, the issuance of a construction tender and installation of our first columbarium structure can be completed. The provision of internment services in our own community has long been supported by our residents and we are pleased that the purchase of the lands for the columbarium facility and planning stage has begun.

Qala:yit, the partnership between the Pacheedaht First Nation and the Cowichan Lake Community Forest Co-operative received great news with the invitation from Forest Minister, the Honorable Steve Thomson, for it to apply for a new Community Forest Agreement(CFA). If Qala:yit is successful in attaining the new license, this will create many jobs and provide huge benefits to the Pacheedaht and Cowichan Lake Communities that will prove sustainable. Congratulations to Qala:yit for its hard work and persistence in working towards this license. Our Community Forest Co-op has been a tremendous asset and its contributions to the Town over the past two decades are greatly appreciated.

March is Distracted Driving Awareness Month and ICBC launched its prevention campaign on March 3. More than 800 crashes occur daily in B.C. and many of these have been caused by distracted driving. Police across the province will be stepping up enhanced enforcement and with this the hope to raise the public's awareness about distracted driving. If you are looking at your cell phone, you can't see the road. When you use a phone while driving, you increase the likelihood of getting into a crash by five times. That is five times the risk of hurting yourself or somebody else on the road. Using an electronic device, while driving, is against the law and can result in tough penalties and stiff fines. As of June 1, 2017, fines and penalties have increased to \$368 and four penalty points will be assessed against the driver. Make sure you understand the law, review the facts about distracted driving and learn the rules around using your mobile device in a vehicle.

The Cowichan Lake Chamber of Commerce awarded its yearly awards on March 9, 2017 at its Annual General Meeting. Congratulations to Greg Adams for being chosen the Citizen of the year, Betty Lou Riel, Barb and Mike Bedard, and Gordon Davidson as Nichole Stock recipients, Honeymoon Bay Lodge and Retreat as Business of the year, and Brandi Arkell of Jake's at the Lake as Employee of the year. Your contributions to this community are greatly appreciated.

Our Minor Hockey Association achieved great success with the Countrywide Realty Midgets and BRI Security Bantams winning their respective playoff championships. Congratulations to all the players and coaches for capturing these well-earned banners and the entire association for the tremendous hockey season provided in our community.

April 2, 2017 is Autism Awareness Day and the Town will be recognizing Autism Day by lighting Ts'uubaa-asatx Square blue.

Ross Forrest, Mayor